



Mitigation Prevents Disaster Declaration for Montevideo, Minnesota

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Chippewa County, Minnesota

Chippewa County, MN - The City of Montevideo, Minnesota knows the benefits of mitigation (reducing loss of life and property). They have been actively mitigating the threat of flooding from the Chippewa River since 1993, when they participated in their first Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) acquisition project. The City's flood-fighting efforts have paid off. In March of 2009, the City experienced its sixth highest flood on record, and yet they had almost no need to assist individuals or businesses in fighting the flood; it had already been done for them through all the mitigation projects.



The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) HMGP, administered by the Minnesota Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, funded four separate projects to mitigate flood damages. In the four projects, the City received \$1,388,759 in Federal funds to acquire 74 floodprone properties. In addition to the HMGP funds, the City worked diligently to obtain other grants to acquire even more floodprone properties. A total of 131 properties have been acquired and removed from the threat of flooding in the City of Montevideo.

One neighborhood known as Smith Addition experienced flooding in 1993, 1997, 2001, and 2009 from the adjacent Chippewa River. The City has acquired 109 properties from Smith Addition, leaving only 21 properties occupied in the area. Of those remaining properties, only a handful are in Flood Zone A (the 1-percent chance floodplain), and the City would like to acquire those and remove the residents from the threat of flooding. Another area called Gravel Road is also floodprone and has been mitigated. There were 22 acquisitions in the Gravel Road neighborhood, with seven homes remaining, all protected by the levee system.

The City had a three-tiered goal: 1) eliminating health and safety issues associated with flood damaged structures, 2) eliminating problems with flooded sanitary sewer systems, and 3) permanently eliminating the need for costly disaster interventions. That goal came to fruition during the 2009 flood. The sixth highest flood proved to be simply a minor inconvenience to the City and its residents. There was no health and safety issue, no flooded sanitary sewer systems, and no costly disaster intervention. The water simply came and went without much concern.

It has all been a very positive experience for the City and its residents. The 2009 flood was the first time the City experienced such devastating flood levels with no damage or threat to life. The City was part of the Presidential Disaster Declaration for 2009 flooding (DR-1830), but they only received assistance through the Public Assistance (Infrastructure) Program. City manager Steve Jones explains the non-declaration by saying, "We weren't declared for Individual Assistance because so few individuals are threatened anymore. It's a great feeling to know that the mitigation has saved not only someone's home from damage but also the flood fighting efforts of the city, state, and Federal governments."

In addition to the many acquisitions, the City has done some of its own mitigation projects, using grant funds from various agencies and organizations, including the City. One of their most effective projects has been raising the pump level at the water treatment plant. That effort allowed the City to continue to provide water treatment service during the 2009 flood. The City has also relocated some homes out of harm's way. Rather than acquiring and demolishing the homes, they were simply relocated away from the threat of flooding.

Jones has been working on these mitigation projects since they began, and he has seen the benefits. "This year," he said, "even with the sixth highest flood, we had no damage and no real threat to life and property. It is exactly why we do mitigation projects: to have an uneventful flood event."

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region V**

State: **Minnesota**

County: **Chippewa County**

City/Community: **Montevideo**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**

Hazard Type: **Flooding**

Activity/Project Type: **Acquisition/Buyouts**

Activity/Project Start Date: **07/1993**

Activity/Project End Date: **10/2004**

Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

Funding Recipient Name: **City of Montevideo**

Application/Project Number: **993.08, 993.28, 1175.02, 1333.15**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$1,388,759.00 (Actual)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Yes**

Federal Disaster #: **993 , 06/11/1993**

Federal Disaster Year: **1993**

Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**

Tested By Federal Disaster #: **1830 , 04/09/2009**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: **<http://www.montevideomn.org>**

| Main Points |
|------------------------------|
| No Main Points were entered. |